

REMARKS

Summary of Claim Status

Claims 1-7 are pending in the present application after entry of the present amendment. Claims 1-7 are rejected for the reasons discussed below. Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of the claims and withdrawal of the pending rejections in light of the following discussion.

Declarations under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131

Applicants have filed herewith declarations under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 signed by all of the inventors of the present application, and declaring that the inventors conceived and reduced to practice their invention before September 12, 2001. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of all rejections based on references having an effective date of September 12, 2001 or later. In particular, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of all rejections based on Eldridge, U.S. Patent Number 6,764,869 ("Eldridge"), which was first filed on September 12, 2001.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Farnworth et al., U.S. Patent Number 6,219,908 ("Farnworth") in view of Eldridge, U.S. Patent Number 6,764,869. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections, and submit that Claims 1-7 are not taught or suggested by Farnworth and Eldridge, either alone or in any combination.

Furthermore, Applicants believe the declarations under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 filed herewith establish that the claimed invention predates Eldridge, and thus Eldridge is not prior art. Therefore, Applicants believe the rejection of Claims 1-7 is moot and should be withdrawn. Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claims 1-7.

Conclusion

In light of the above remarks, Applicants believe that Claims 1-7 are in condition for allowance, and allowance of the application is therefore requested. If action other than allowance is contemplated by the Examiner, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone Applicants' attorney, Justin Liu, at 408-879-4641.

Respectfully submitted,



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